

NSC BRIEFING

9 September 1959

## SINO-INDIAN BORDER DISPUTE

- I. Peiping's increased assertiveness in the Indian border area is outgrowth of Tibetan developments. Chinese are determined to bring Tibet under their control and eliminate any hope Tibetans may have for gaining independence with outside assistance.
  - A. Chinese troops trying to seal the border; Peiping feels Indian border troops helping Tibetan escapees, especially along Assam frontier.
  - B. Peiping protested in June the activation of Indian outposts at the Tibetan border following the Tibet revolt.
    1. New Indian outposts evidently viewed by Chinese leaders as a challenge to Peiping's authority in the remote area.
- II. Chinese incursions into Indian territory across the undemarcated border have been reported since 1950.
  - A. Road constructed in 1957 by the Chinese linking Tibet with Sinkiang province passes through corner of Kashmir in area claimed by both India and China.
  - B. Most serious incident occurred when Chinese troops attacked recently established Indian outpost at Longj<sup>u</sup>y on Tibet-Assam border on 26 August penetrating three miles south of the McMahon line.
    1. McMahon line, accepted in 1914 by Britain and Tibet as border, has not been recognized by any Chinese government.

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III. Nehru told aroused Parliament on 28 August that Chinese incursions into Assam were "clear case of aggression," but conceded "mistakes" might happen in Ladakh because of lack of demarcation there.

A. Nehru--committed since 1950 to defend McMahon line--said he would strengthen border defenses and repel incursions.

1. Indian reinforcements have been sent into northeast frontier region.
2. Border units are reported moving slowly back toward frontier line in effort to recover captured outposts, but no contact with Chinese yet.

IN NOTE TO CHINA, NEHRU OFFERED NOT TO RE-GARRISON ZONGTU, IF CHINESE WITHDRAWN. HE REASSERTED VALIDITY OF MACMAHON LINE.

3. Nehru stated on 7 September that there had been no further developments on northeast frontier.

B. Nehru has emphasized that while taking action to defend frontier India would strive hard to settle its border problems with Peiping through diplomatic channels.

1. To set record straight New Delhi issued White Paper on 7 September documenting long exchange of protests with Peiping over various border questions, thus publicizing full extent of Sino-Indian disputes.
2. Nehru has also made special effort to inform Soviet and Polish governments--including Khrushchev personally--of Indian position, presumably in hope Moscow will restrain Peiping.

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- IV. Situation in Himalayan border states is tense, with rumors of Chicom troop concentrations and probings along frontier causing some panic among local people.
- A. Bhutan moving to improve its defenses with Indian aid, despite apprehension that New Delhi will extend its control over Bhutanese affairs.
- B. Nepal has also taken firm stand against Chinese encroachment, but like India is emphasizing diplomatic solution to problems.
- V. Chinese desire a pullback of Indian troops from border outposts in disputed area, and have used a combination of small patrol harassments and demands through diplomatic channels.
- A. According to Indian White Paper, Chou En-lai told Nehru in 1956 that Peiping would in practice respect the McMahon Line as the boundary between Tibet and Assam, although Chou apparently did not accept the line as legally valid.
- B. Chinese activity thus far has been confined to vicinity of McMahon line and Peiping apparently does not intend now to push 100 miles south to the border claimed on their maps which is at the edge of the Indian plain.

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1. ~~Notably sparse~~ bloc press and radio comment has pointed to the desirability of negotiating the Sino-Indian differences. TASS statement on 9 September stressed Soviet friendship for both India and China and carefully refrained

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2. Chinese will make no major concessions in negotiations; would instead probably string them out without agreeing to a final solution.

VI. By-product of border dispute was apparent effort on 31 August on the part of Indian military to oust Defense Minister Krishna Menon.

- A. General Thimayya resigned, claiming too much politics in Defense Ministry.
- B. Nehru said Thimayya's reasons "trivial," strongly supported Krishna Menon, and got Thimayya to withdraw resignation.
- C. Menon coming to UNGA session in New York, leaving much friction and bitterness behind.

1. He may eventually be brought down if border tension does not abate.

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VII. In midst of this problem, Dalai Lama, who still has no sponsor for his case, has appealed directly to UNSYG Hammarskjold for "immediate intervention" by the UN in the Tibetan case.

A. Dalai asked that UNGA's steering committee (which includes GA president, nine vice presidents, and chairmen of seven GA committees) take up Tibetan case on its own initiative.

1. Dalai plea based on argument Tibet independent since 1912 and that human rights not being respected by Chinese.

B. Dalai may visit New York in attempt to ensure hearing of his case.

C. Though Dalai has widespread sympathy, no country eager to sponsor him.

1. Indian public opinion on Lama's side but government feels discussion useless--no one will fight China for Tibet--and fears bringing case to UN will force USSR to declare itself on side of Communist China.